

# Saddleback Butte State Park

## Trail & Facility Map

To Make the Best of Your Visit and to Protect the Park, Please Observe the Following Rules:

**DO NOT COLLECT, DESTROY OR DISTURB PLANTS, ANIMALS OR ROCK.** They are the main attraction of the park and all are protected. *Burning of dead or down Joshua Trees or shrubs for firewood is strictly prohibited.*

**DO NOT LITTER.** Keep trash secured; desert wind is strong and unpredictable.

**OFF-ROADING IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE PARK.** Vehicles must stay on roads and in designated parking only. 15 MPH speed limit.

**CAMPING AND DAY-USE FEES MUST BE PAID ON ARRIVAL.** Deposit the fee envelope in the green "iron ranger" and place the completed receipt on your dashboard. Campsite checkout is noon.

**KEEP PETS ON LEASH.** Dogs must be on a 6-foot leash or in an enclosed tent or vehicle, and are not allowed on trails (except for Service Dogs). Visitors with vicious or noisy dogs will be evicted.

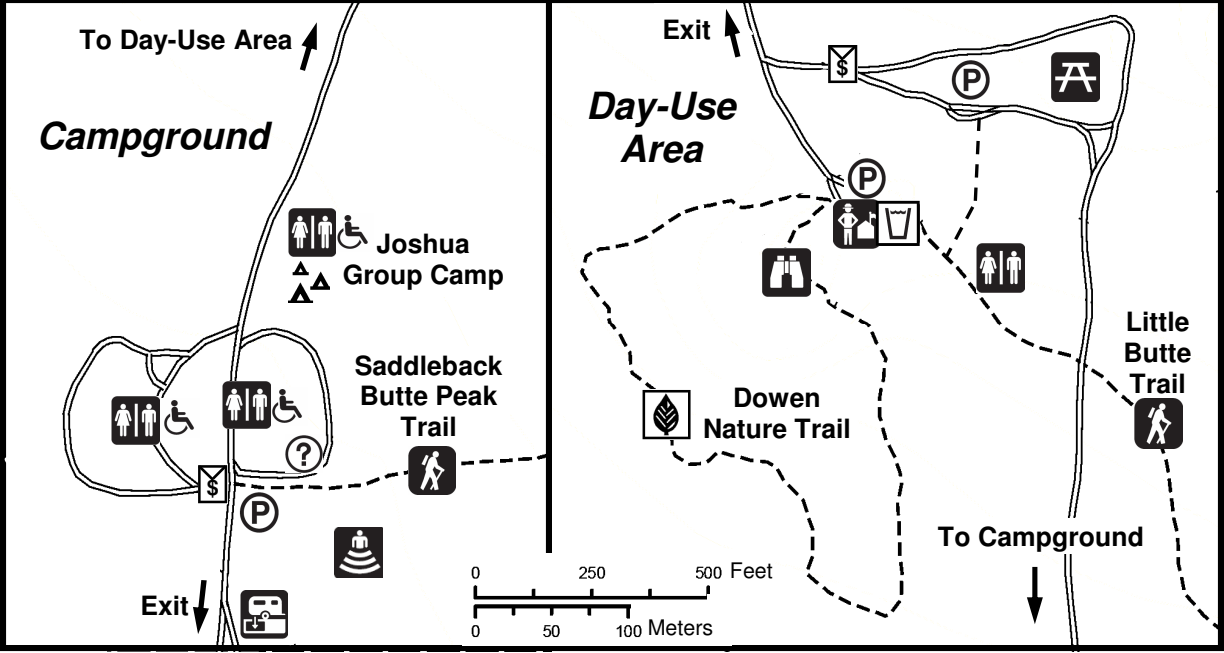
**LOADED FIREARMS AND FIREWORKS ARE PROHIBITED.**

**GENERATORS MAY ONLY BE USED FROM 10 AM TO 8 PM.** Loud, disturbing noise is never allowed.

**FIRES ARE ONLY ALLOWED IN THE PROVIDED FIRE RINGS.** Portable barbecues and stoves may only be used within the campsite. Be careful when burning anything, including tobacco products. Wildfires are disastrous to the desert and take decades to heal.

### Map Key

- |                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Park Boundary            | Local Road        |
| Contour Interval 50 Feet | State Park Road   |
| Campground               | Campfire Center   |
| Picnic Area              | Nature Trail      |
| Restrooms                | Drinking Water    |
| Hiking Trail             | Dump Station      |
| Scenic Overlook          | Group Camp        |
| Visitor Center           | Trailhead Parking |
| Equestrian Trail         | Camp Host         |
| Eq. Staging Area         | Fee Station       |
| Locked Eq. Gate          | Accessible        |



### Desert Hiking Precautions

- Drink before you leave and when you're not thirsty! By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated. The air takes moisture from your breath and dries your sweat, so you lose water faster than you expect.
- Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back.
- Drink pure water. Flavored drinks and electrolyte replacers inhibit your body from absorbing the most important ingredient: water.
- Bring: hat, sunglasses, sunblock, cell phone, water, trail map, compass, flashlight, salty snacks, more water, first aid kit, layered long-sleeved clothing, camera, extra water.

Thank you visiting our park and we hope you enjoy your experience! For more information, call the Mojave Desert Information Center at (661) 942-0662 or Saddleback Butte Visitor Center at (661) 727-9899.



The quietly commanding Saddleback Butte towers some thousand feet above the broad alluvial plains of the Antelope Valley on the western edge of the Mojave Desert, less than 15 miles east of the bustling city of Lancaster. One of many similar land features in the Antelope Valley, the butte (defined as a “solitary mountain”) was once the core of an ancient volcano whose shell eroded down over time, leaving a protruding granite mass culminating at 3,651 feet in elevation.

Twisted, sharp, and intriguing, the abstract shapes of the Joshua Trees are beautiful in their distortion, dotting the vast high desert landscape among pungent Creosote bushes. The 2,955 acre park was created in 1960 to preserve this habitat for the native plants and animals that were once common here, but are becoming increasingly rare due primarily to loss of habitat.

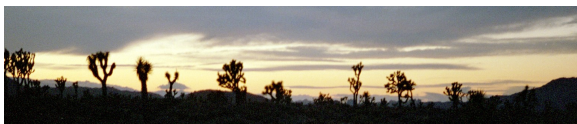


Desert dwellers that make the park home include coyotes and kit foxes, jack rabbits, cottontail rabbits, kangaroo rats, many kinds of snakes and lizards, and the occasional badger or skunk. Be cautious of the Sidewinder and Mojave Green rattlesnakes (the deadliest of the rattlers), which slink about in the warm evenings searching for rodents. A celebrated resident is the Desert Tortoise, sometimes seen by visitors with the curiosity and patience to embrace the quiet, unhurried ways of this age-old desert animal. If seen, however, the tortoise must be left alone as it is a federally protected Threatened Species.

Bird life includes many migratory species, and a few permanent residents— golden eagles, hawks, ravens, and owls, and smaller birds such as cactus wrens, horned larks, finches, and shrikes.



The best time to visit is in the springtime when wildflowers are apt to put on a beautiful display of color. Autumn is also likely to be pleasant as well, although temperatures may vary widely and change suddenly. Summer temperatures average 95° F and occasionally range as high as 115° F, but evenings are peaceful with warm breezes and clear skies. Frost and sub-freezing temperatures are common in the winter, with occasional snow.



## Day-Use Facilities

The day-use area includes 27 picnic sites with tables and barbecue grills, and shade ramadas for protection from the sun and wind. Water and pit toilets are located near the picnic area.



Explore the colorful displays and hands-on exhibits illustrating the natural and cultural history of the area at the Saddleback Butte Visitor Center, which also offers a serene, scenic view overlooking the park.

## Campground Facilities

The family campground has 50 first-come, first-served sites featuring tables, barbecue grills, fire rings and shade ramadas, with a limit of eight people per site. Accessible restrooms and water are located throughout the campground. RVs/campers up to 30 feet are welcome and a dump station is available. Use of the group camp, for up to 30 people and 12 vehicles, is by reservation only.

## Hiking

The peak can be reached from the day-use area by hiking the 2.5 mile Little Butte Trail, or from the campground take the 2-mile Saddleback Butte Peak Trail. The trails begin on a mild slope through moderately loose sand among creosote bushes and Joshua trees, to the base of the butte where they merge. It then becomes a challenging climb up sand and rock, but the finale is worth every step— at the top, enjoy a breathtaking 360° view over the Antelope Valley and east across the Mojave desert. For a nice moderate 3-mile loop, take either trail east to where the two trails meet, go back west on the other, and then take the park's gravel main road to return to the trailhead where you started.

The short self-guided Downen Nature Trail loop commences at the Visitor Center, highlighting the variety of unique natural features of the park.

## Equestrian Use

A 4.5 mile horse trail skirts along the north and west base of the butte. A 10-mile loop can be made by beginning north-east of the park at the equestrian staging area gate and exiting south-west at the service yard gate, then continuing around the south and east boundaries of the park. The equestrian staging area has easy pull-through access for large vehicles. Equestrian use is regulated to preserve the integrity of the park; call (661) 942-0662 for gate access. Horses are limited to the designated equestrian trail and staging area, and horse camping is not available. Group events are welcome with advance notice.

## Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. For more information about Saddleback Butte State Park or to receive this publication in an alternate format, please contact:

**Mojave Desert Information Center**  
(661) 942-0662

**43779 15th Street West, Lancaster CA 93534**  
**MDIC@parks.ca.gov**

**Saddleback Butte State Park**  
(661) 727-9899

**Visit us on the web at: [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)**

**Directions** 43230 172nd Street East, Lancaster

From Hwy 14: Exit Avenue K in Lancaster, go east 18 miles, turn left on 170th St East. Signs are on the right.

From Hwy 15: Take Hwy 138 west, go north on 165th St East. It becomes 170th St, continue to Avenue K.

Campground Entrance: 170th St East & East Ave K.

Day Use Area: 170th St East & East Ave J (one mile north of Campground entrance).

## Operating Hours

Day-Use Area available Sunrise-Sunset

Campground open 24-Hours

Visitor Center hours vary; call for schedule.

**Park Use Fees** Senior & Disabled Discounts available.

\$5 Day-Use fee per vehicle applies for hiking, use of Day-Use area, non-camper use of Dump Station, and for individual Equestrians.

\$12 Camping fee per overnight use of family campground sites with 1 vehicle; \$5 each extra vehicle.

\$66 Group Camp by reservation through Reserve America, (800) 444-7275 or ReserveAmerica.com.



**California State  
Parks**

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*Discover the Desert Experience*

**Information and Park Map**